

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

19-119

Orleans

J

EAS.194

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Bridge-Dyer Prince Road Area

Photograph



Address: 431 Dyer Prince Road

Historic Name: Ward and Alberta Porter House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: [1932-1938]

Source: Deed research, 1938 USGS aerial photo

Style/Form: No Style/ Full Cape

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Unknown

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Window replacements

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.60 acres

Setting: This parcel is located at the western end of Dyer Prince Road near Rock Harbor Beach. The linear parcel extends along the salt marsh, and it is landscaped with lawn and stands of cedar trees and scrub pine. A horizontal board fence partially obscures the house from view. The surrounding area includes large contemporary houses and the ca. 1834 Robert Mayo house across the street at 480 Dyer Prince Road (EAS.195).

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

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EASTHAM

431 DYER PRINCE ROAD

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☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Ward and Alberta Porter House, built in ca. 1935, has a variation of the Full Cape form.¹ The front elevation has the five bay configuration with centered entrance typical of the Full Cape form, but the high roof actually has a saltbox form with a two-story rear elevation rather than a 1½-story gable-roofed form typical of Capes. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles, and the front roof cornice has broad frieze boards below. The windows all appear to be thermal, replacement 6/6 double-hung sash. The 6/6 muntin pattern was also likely the original muntin pattern. In addition to the main block, there is a one-story ell on the left (east) side with a farmer's porch.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

This house is located at the western end of Dyer Prince Road near Rock Harbor Beach. It is also located at the western end of the Bridge-Dyer Prince Road MHC Area Form (EAS.J). In the updated version of this Area Form, the surveyor concluded that the Bridge-Dyer Prince Road Area was eligible as a district to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places as one of the few clusters of well-preserved historic buildings within Eastham and for its strong maritime associations connected with Rock Harbor.

As can be seen on the 1910 Barnstable County Atlas, residential development was clustered to the east on Dyer Prince Road and along Bridge Road. There is a lone house in this general location on the north side of the street, which is the ca. 1834 Mayo House, identified on the 1910 Map with the name B. B. Prince (Figure 2).

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has periodically conducted aerial photographic surveys of Cape Cod. They started in 1938, and that first aerial survey shows that this area still sparsely settled but with this house in place (Photo 2). Like the 1910 Atlas map, this photo shows how development was concentrated to the east, as well as the south side of Rock Harbor that became part of Orleans when that town was established in 1797.

Title research connects this house to the aforementioned Mayo House at 480 Dyer Prince Road. The 1910 Atlas is incorrect in labelling that house as belonging to "B. B. Prince." The owner at that time was Benjamin D. Prince. According to the MHC Building Form for that property, Benjamin Dyer Prince (1848-1923) was the son of James and Chloe Rich Prince. He had grown up in his

¹ Cape is a form, not an architectural style.

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parents' household at 101 Dyer Prince Road (EAS.149) and began his working life as a seaman, but by 1875 he had moved to Attleboro and entered that city's jewelry trade. His wife Estella Phillips died in 1881, and in 1883 he bought 480 Dyer Prince Road and likely moved back to Eastham at that time. He was living alone and working as a farmer or truck farmer in the 1900, 1910 and 1920 census records.

Benjamin Prince died in January 1923, and a year later James Bradley Steele, his neighbor and the administrator of his estate, sold 480 Dyer Prince Road to Dwight E. Timmerman of Canton.² The property consisted of 29 acres. Timmerman worked as an insurance broker, and likely used this property seasonally. He was also likely a sportsman - when he sold the property in February 1930, the deed conveyed all the furniture and furnishings in the house "except ducks, duck decoys, and geese decoys." The property was sold to Ward F. Porter of Malden.

Cambridge-born Ward F. Porter married Alberta Hall (1874-1950) in Malden in 1912, and he worked as a Boston-based attorney. The same year he bought the 29-acre parcel, he platted an 87-lot subdivision bordering the bay and Rock Harbor Creek (Figure 3). The subdivision was never laid out. In 1932, he sold the house at 480 Dyer Prince Road with an acre of land. In 1945, he sold "a portion" of the original 29-acre land, with a dwelling (this house), to Natalie E. Norris and Mary E. Bond of Boston.³ Given that this house is shown on the 1938 USGS photo, that would mean it was built for Ward and Alberta Porter, and it was built sometime between 1932 and 1938.

Natalie Norris obtained sole ownership in 1952, and the two deeds for that transaction were the first to reference the 1930 plan, stating that this parcel consisted of Lot 30, parts of Lots 29, 31, and 33, and portions of the surrounding roads.⁴ Natalie Norris was living in Sandwich in 1989 when she sold this property to William H. Doe, Trustee of Dyer Prince Realty Trust. In 1993, Doe sold it to Clare M. Peckham of New London, CT and it remained in trusts established by the Peckham family until 2017 when it was sold out of the family.⁵

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www.ancestry.com - Vital records.

² Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Book 399/ Page 597.

³ Book 627/ Page 598.

⁴ Book 804/ Page 391, Book 804/ Page 393.

⁵ Book 8900/ Page 8, Book 315579/ Page 350.

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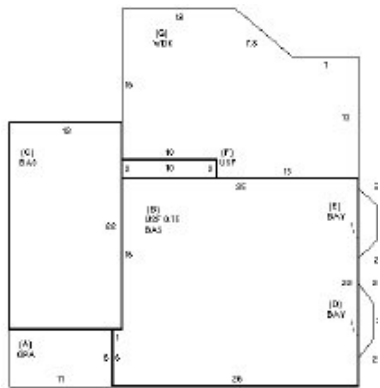


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Figure 2. Detail of 1910 Barnstable County Atlas.



Photo 2. Detail from 1938 aerial survey of USGS (arrow to 431 Dyer Prince Road added).

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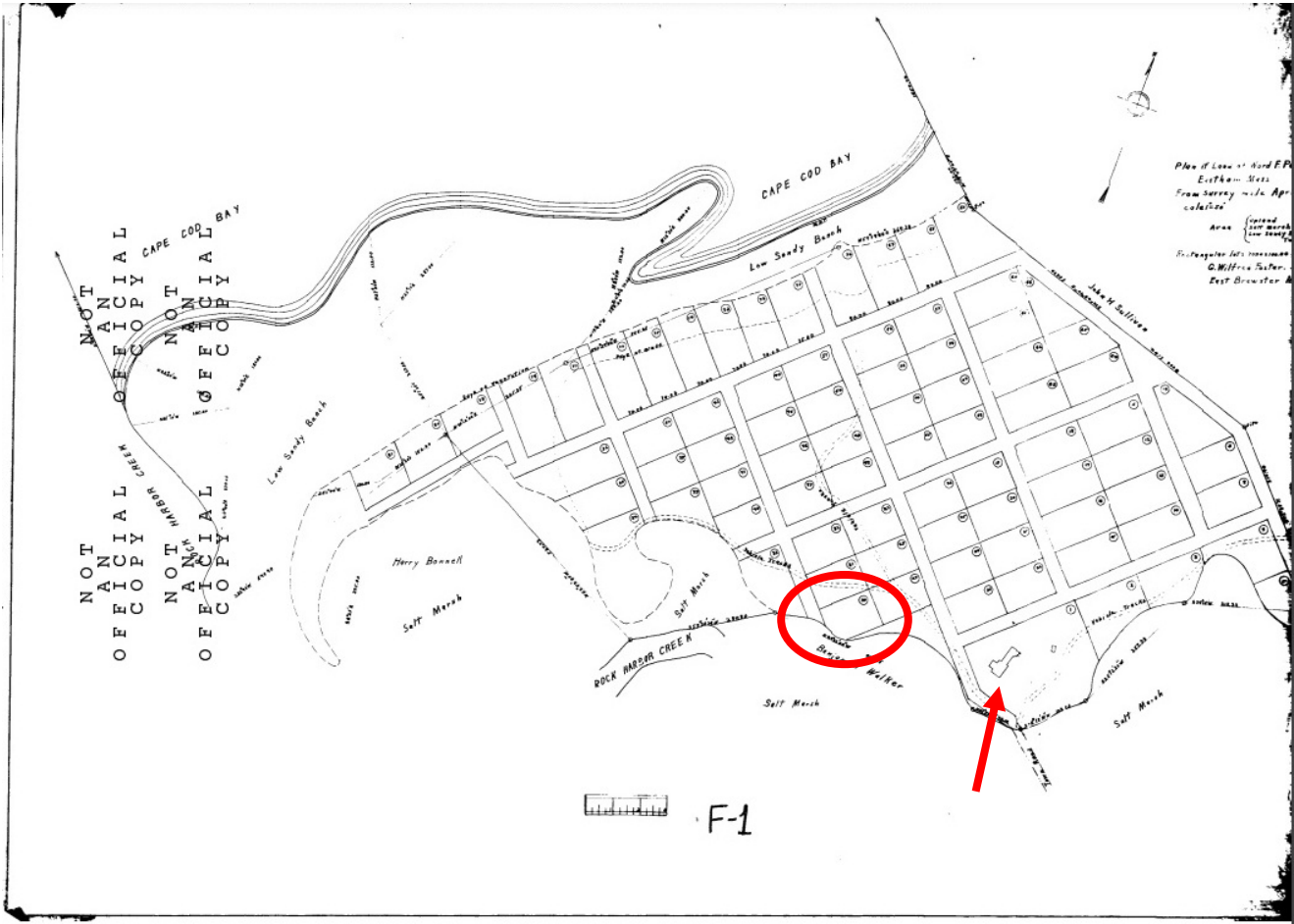


Figure 3. 1930 Porter subdivision plan (arrow to 480 Dyrer Prince Road and circle around future site of 431 Dyer Prince Road added).

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Individually eligible ☒ Eligible **only** in a historic district
- ☒ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Candace Jenkins

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

(From MHC Area Form EAS.J, 2000)

431 Dyer Prince Road is listed as a contributing building in the Bridge-Dyer Prince Roads Area Form. The Bridge and Dyer Prince Roads Historic District appears to be eligible for listing in the NRHP. It is significant on the local level under criteria A and C as one of the very few clusters of well preserved historic buildings within the town of Eastham. This cluster on Rock Harbor possesses strong maritime associations and remains clearly related to Orleans which was set off as a separate town in 1797. This residential area includes a variety of dwellings from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. Several are outstanding examples of their style and period within the town as a whole. The high degree of integrity of setting is especially unusual and important.